

Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative

Staffing, Organization, and Budget Needs

Goals

- The program efficiently implements science-based, on-the-ground projects, benefiting sensitive species and their habitats.
- The program addresses a large landscape area for a period of time to match the period of initial intense energy development in Southwest Wyoming.
- Planning and implementation to achieve desired habitat benefits, requires a long-term effort of at least a decade.
- The program will require sufficient continuity of personnel and resources to be capable of achieving habitat benefits.
- A multiple-use, interdisciplinary approach will ensure that benefits to habitat do not impact other approved uses of public land.

Initial Staffing and Organization

- An executive oversight committee of agency directors will be created to provide strategic direction, set priorities, and provide funding direction and management. Additional advisory sub-committees or management working groups may be created to address and advise science needs and information management. These sub-committees would not be part of the WLCI staff, but would be directly linked to the WLCI on an as-needed basis. This will help ensure adequate coordination of specific program direction and the optimal use of existing agency resources.
- The program will require an inter-agency teamwork approach. The initial positions required for this program will need to be experienced, mid-career professionals from the agencies directly involved with wildlife and habitat management or providing essential day-to-day support for this effort (BLM, USFWS, USGS, WGFD). There would also be collaboration with Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, and the US Forest Service regarding related land uses.
- At a minimum, the WLCI office will need a lead coordinator, an administrative support position, and at least one person from each agency involved (minimum of 6 people) in order to effectively plan and coordinate with other agency managers and land users/landowners, compile info, plan and implement on-the-ground projects, and monitor results. The lead coordinator should be a BLM resource manager, with the professional team comprised of a BLM resource manager, a USFWS biologist, a WGFD habitat biologist, and a USGS landscape ecologist. Each person would work specifically and full-time with the program, and would be an employee of and coordinate input from their respective agencies.

Budget Needs

- Given the long-term nature of the program's goals, it will be necessary to assure that funds are available in sufficient amounts, for the life of the project.
- Reliable funding for at least 10-year blocks is necessary to assure adequate program function and continuity. On-the-ground habitat work, as well as the hiring and retention of key personnel, are both items that need to be addressed over the long term, and will depend on assurances of program continuity.
- One source of funding for the first 10-year period is an endowment of \$10 million from non-federal sources, equating to about \$1 million for personnel, office, and equipment costs per year. Other sources of federal, state, industry, and other funds will be used for project planning and implementation. The endowment is viewed as a reasonable and workable amount, considering the land area, types of projects envisioned, personnel and time required for initially administering the components of the program, and the potential for leveraging partnership funding.

- Non-government funds can be stored in a third party account (e.g., Wildlife Heritage Foundation of Wyoming, Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust) for efficiency of use. Additional funding mechanisms and authorizations may be applicable.
- Some potential sources of project funding include:
 - BLM's oil and gas funds
 - Other federal agency funds
 - State agency funds
 - Non-Government Organizations
 - Industry